

EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED

#5

December 16th, 1987

Circulation 72

Meat is Murder

EXCITORIAL

I don't think that Christmas was designed for Barbara and me. As Joe Biden once said, "Christmas. Bah, humbug".

We can't work out what is worse: the commercialism or the religion. Perhaps they deserve each other. How about a constitutional separation of religion and Christmas? At the very least, there should be a separation of Christmas and schmalz. We hate the Christmas muzak which stores insist on subjecting you to. It's enough to make you end sentences with prepositions.

And now they have the nerve to preempt Hooperman again. Does anyone watch those awful Christmas "Family Specials"? For Christmas we want sex and violence!

On a related note, I looked at a menorah today and wondered why five of the light bulbs had blown simultaneously...

And now my indenting is shot to hell.

I still need players for the two variants I would like to run. On offer is Stab, a fascinating hidden movement variant of Diplomacy, and Downfall of the Lord of the Rings, the popular British Tolkein variant. If you have the slightest interest, feel free to ask for a copy of the rules. A few people will be receiving this issue as a sample to encourage them to join a game. I hope you like ECU enough to subscribe and join a game or two. If you send in your orders without fail each season, I'm sure I'll get to like you too.

Also enclosed is a flyer for World Dip Con in Britain. All publicity from other editors would be much appreciated. If you're tired of typing, please note that the flyer is camera-ready and would fit nicely into your zine. Hint. Hint. If anyone would like extra copies, just ask.

In case you were wondering the deadline this issue has been extended a week due to the standard Christmas mail delays.

Next issue might feature the ISE subzine, US Dollar\$, an article on the variant Cline 9 and, possibly, a review of the albums of 1987. You really can't wait, can you...

Excitement City Unlimited is published by Simon Billenness and Barbara Passoff who live at 630 Victory Blvd. Apt 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA. Home phone is (718) 981 6247. Americans pay 50¢ per issue. Everyone else pays 75¢.

Looking back at the last issue of ECU, I feel the zine lacks something if I just plunge into articles on page two. Since I never got round to writing that article on Cline 9 I promised last time, how about a couple a couple of pages of hobby news and general musings?

I'm surprised that I've managed so far to publish the zine exactly a week after the deadline for four successive issues. (I shouldn't really say that. Now I'll screw up the printing, put the zine out late and feel very stupid...) When I published Inflammatory Material back in Britain, I had a bad reputation for regularity, which, admittedly, was deserved. Instead of being described as a four-weeker or a five-weeker, one wit christened Flame as the "once-in-a-blue-moon" zine.

I'm not sure why it's working the second time round. It may be due to the fact that my life is a lot less hectic than it was during my second year at university. Perhaps I'm a little more mature. I know that I'm determined to live down my old reputation and I could be over-compensating a little. After all, one of the most regular and reliable British zines over the last few years, Home of the Brave, was edited by Geoff Challinger, who was obviously doing his best to live down his past failings as a student publisher. I think the most important factor is that I've scaled down my plans for the zine. My aim is a regular 16-20 page zine running three games (Stab, Cline 9 and Downfall - sign up you miserable gits) with a few articles and several letters. As Ken Peel wisely remarks on occasion, you shouldn't aim to produce a massive Zine Poll topping zine. It's far better to create a zine you're comfortable and able to publish. If it takes off in size and popularity without straining you, then fine. But don't count on it!

One of the best pieces of advice for new editors is to not take the hobby too seriously. Some things should be taken seriously of course. If your players complain about poor GMing and extended deadlines, you ought to do something. However reviews and Zine Poll results should always be taken with a bucketful of salt. Just as in life generally, a thick skin is often required! I am worried when new publishers take the hobby too much to heart. A good example would be Mike Hopcroft.

Mike edits a zine which he, rather straight forwardly, entitles Not Up To Modern Graphics Standards. The zine has suffered from a rather shaky start due to the fact that Mike is inexperienced, rather sensitive, unemployed and unlucky enough to get caught in the crossfire of a major hobby feud at the start of his publishing career. Nevertheless, Mike does seem to have learnt fast on his feet and I'm glad to see his zine shows a marked improvement with every issue. In a recent letter Mike tells me that he's purchased a computer and word-processor to assist with the zine's layout and GMing. I'm also glad to hear that he's thinking of adopting Nutmeg as the zine's new title. So my campaign with Linda Courtemanche to rename his zine has worked! Once, I'd gladly recommend the zine to anyone interested in widening their subscriptions.
Mike Hopcroft, 2190 W. Burnside #108, Portland, OR 97210

I had the happy task the other day of writing to Allan Calhammer on behalf of the Manorcon/World Dip Con committee. The committee are paying for his flight and providing free accomodation during his visit to Britain as the con's guest of honour. This must be one of the nicest things the hobby has been able to do for him. Maybe he'll also visit Europe and Australia too, provided World Dip Con takes off. Let's hope so.

With the ghastly growth in Britain of relentlessly cheerful telephone-salesmen getting us out of the bath to tell us a new way to insulate the roof, I pass on my brother-in-law's latest technique for fighting back.

The American salesman starts his spiel by asking: "How are you, Mr Eager?" Mr Eager replies: "I'm glad you asked me that. As a matter of fact, my back is giving me trouble, and I've been wanting to talk about it with somebody." And he does so for five minutes before saying goodbye and hanging up.

* The startling hypnot strikes again!

PDO AUCTION NEWS

You should find enclosed this year's PDO Auction booklet detailing all the fascinating items to be sold off this year to help hobby services. As usual there are some inspired choices. There is a VHS video of a Pacific University production of Romeo & Juliet featuring Mike Hopcroft as Friar Lawrence. This is apparently "very weird...set post-holocaust"... I'm planning to bid for one of the five "Anderson For President" buttons. Although I'm one of the co-organisers for the Auction, I feel I ought to point out that virtually all of the work on the booklet was done by John Caruso, who deserves praise for his excellent work.

Also included in the booklet are a few questions on how the Auction should be conducted in future. John suggests for discussion the idea that bidders should simply say which services their money should go to. This idea has a lot of merit. Dividing up hobby money for services is always a controversial task. Currently the Auction money is allocated by a five person committee which, this year, is composed of Steve Arnawoodian, Alan Stewart, Steve Langley, Andy Lischett and Bill Quinn. Leaving the allocation to the discretion of the voters themselves seems a very fair and democratic method. It might also be less controversial. However it would mean more work for the Auction's organisers.

Open for discussion is the idea that the Auction should only be run every other year, instead of every year. John and I were worried this year that the number of items donated would sharply drop this year, but fortunately a lot of pledges came through at the last minute. I take the Micawberish view that something will always turn up each year. Besides I'm sure the custodians of the Orphans Service and the BNC (usually the two largest recipients of PDO money) would prefer to receive two smaller amounts every year rather than a large one every two years. After all, services can't put their costs on hold for a year.

If you want to stick your oar in, feel free to send your views to John Caruso. While you're at it, why not send in a couple of bids?

MORE ZINE PLUGS

A recent arrival has been the new slimline It's A Trap. Now that Steve Knight has given up the ISE and running Diplomacy games, the zine has become a little more regular. However there is still some progress to be made. Unlike previous issues, which were delayed for such reasons as Steve chopping off part of his left thumb with an axe, this issue is late partly because Steve felt faint after diarrhea and cramps and ended up coming round on his bathroom floor minus two teeth and vomiting. I think we can excuse him that... However, I suspect some delays are due to procrastination and a desire to put out a "perfect" zine. This is a shame because IT! is as much the literate and amusing zine which once came third in the Zine Poll. In particular, I am jealous by the high standard of the debate on culture and colorization in the letter column. IT! doesn't really have openings right now and it only runs United, the soccer management game. However I would recommend it for general reading.
Steve Knight, 1807 Ford Parkway #105, St Paul, MN 55116-2165

Also recommended is a zine from another editor who's returning to the fold. (Oops, what an inappropriate metaphor!). If the first issue is anything to go by, the recently revived Passchendaele should make great reading.
Francois Guerrier, 2303 Eglinton Ave. East, #305, Scarborough, Ont. M1K 2N6, Canada.

THE GAMES

I have a couple of pleas:

1. I need one more player for my international Cline 9 game. Colin Grubb never replied to the gamestart announcement and I haven't been able to find a replacement. The first person, preferably non-American, to send me a preference list and opening statement (just a paragraph describing yourself to the other players) will get the spot.
2. I need Cline 9 standbys urgently. My offer last issue remains. If you sign up as a standby, you receive one issue free straight away. If you submit standby orders which are used, you receive a further three free issues. Roll up, please...

SORRYCONRADSORRYCONRADSORRYCONRADSORRYCONRADSORRYCONRADSORRYCONRADSORRYCONRADSO

WILLIAM RUFUS DEVANE KING

AUTUMN 1907

I read an amusing comment in a recent Costaguana. In a nice review of ECU, Conrad states: "It (ECU) doesn't pad its pages with error-correction after error-correction. When Simon runs games, he runs them well." I'm sure Conrad wouldn't have written that had he seen last season's adjudication in time! I am truly sorry for the errors last time. This season the report is going to be triple-checked!

Please note that the Italian f alb was wrongly reported as an army. Also the French army in Burgundy cannot retreat to Paris because there was a standoff there the previous season. However the French can build an army in Paris so the French orders should read: a bre s a par, a par s a bre. This is what the French player ordered. What I printed last season was a typo.

Nobody requested a deadline extension, which is a relief.

Retreats: English f swe-otb, since Jack McHugh failed to send standby orders.

Austria: Kevin Tighe

a con s Persian a arm-ank

Barbary: Jake Walters

f nao-wao, f wal-iri, f lon-eng, f spanc-gas, a alg s a sah-lib, a sah-lib

England: Jack McHugh

NMR! no units left anyway

France: Jeff Hoffman

a bre s a par, a par s a bre

Germany: Mike Pustilnik

a edi-hol, f nth c a edi-hol, f bel s f nth, a pie-mar, a tyr-tri,

a ven s a tyr-tri, a vie s a tyr-tri, a mun-tyr, a den holds,

f stpnc-nwy, f swe s f stpnc-nwy

Italy: Robert Acheson

a mar-spa, a gas s a mar-spa, f tys-rom, f alb s a tri, a bul-con,

f aeg s a bul-con, a tri s Russian a gal-vie, a gre-bul, f cre-ion

Persia: John Crosby

f ant-wao, a lib s a tun-alg, a tun-alg, a arm-ank, f gos-ion,

f sms s f gos-ion, f smy s Austrian a con

Russia: Conrad von Metzke

a rum-bul, a ser s a rum-bul, a gal-bud, a sev-rum,

f bla s Turkish a ank-con

Turkey: Doug Brown

a ank-con

Retreats: Barbary f spanc-mao/por/otb, Italian a tri & a bul are destroyed

Adjustments

A: 1: con

B: 6: mor, alg, can, por, ~~spa~~, lon, lpl Remove 1 or no change

E: 0: ~~swe~~

F: 2: par, bre

G: 15: kie, mun, ber, bel, vie, den, nwy, hol, edi, stp, pie +swe, +tri,
+ven, +mar Plus 4

I: 6: rom, nap, ~~ser~~, cor, ~~war~~, ~~yii~~, gre, ~~ser~~, cre, +spa Remove 1

P: 7: ara, jor, ira, eth, egypt, tun, smy No change

R: 7: mos, sev, war, rum, bud, +ser, +bul Plus 2

T: 1: ank, ~~bul~~ No change

No press

Deadline: Saturday, January 23rd, 1988

Gamenotes

Would anyone object if we used the ECU houserules for this game? At the moment I'm just making rulings off the top of my head. Of course, I'd probably waive rule 8, which lays down a European-style two-season year. Let me know your feelings.

WAITING LISTS

Stab: GM - me

Derwood Bowen, Doug Brown, Glenn Petroski

Downfall of the Lord of the Rings: GM - me

Bruce Geryk, Doug Brown, Cathy Ozog, Rod Walker and maybe Geoffrey Richard

I still need plenty of players for the above two ^{games} ~~players~~. I've had a little interest and I'm also going to send the rules and a sample ECU to prospective punters. I'll fill these games, even if it kills me... There are no gamefees. Just inquire for a copy of the rules.

Railway Rivals: GM: Brian Longstaff

Mark Nelson, Doug Brown

No gamefee but the maps cost about \$2 and Brian charges one International Reply Coupon per turn. Deadlines 5-6 weeks. Let me know if you want to play Map N (New England) or Map T (Middle Earth).

International Diplomacy: GM Mark Nelson

Martin Kloosterman (Australia), David Stone (Trinidad), Edward Ainsworth(UK)

There are openings for two international games. The first is for a "Seven Nations" game with only one player allowed from a single country. The second game will just be a free for all. No gamefee. The games will be run by outside GMs so the houserules may be different.

Standbys: Cline 9 Conrad von Metzke
All Purpose Doug Brown

LETTUCE

Edward Ainsworth Having only been a member of the hobby for only a mere two years I've nevertheless heard of the great name of Simon Billenness and its with great surprise and awe that I opened your letter.

((I'm always a sucker for flattery, even if it is tongue in cheek!
Have a free issue, Edward.))

Cathy Ozog I just had to write back - what with you asking about Meacham and all. First off, Simon, just because I'm a Republican does not mean I voted for the man. I voted for Carolyn Warner. When Meacham won, I was shocked but willing to let him go on with his term. Then he got rid of the Martin Luther King holiday. Mind you, he said he would do that before he was elected. People started awakening from the dead. The recall was started and it was hip to sign up. You could register to vote at a table right next to the recall petition. Where were all these people the first time around? Why didn't they vote? If they didn't care enough the first time, why are they signing the recall? I won't vote in the recall. I voted once - in the real election and I won't vote this time. Meacham is only one man. Arizona will survive with or without him.

((The saga of Evan Meacham has given Arizona some rather dubious publicity. The story even reached the pages of the British Observer and the New Musical Express (after U2 gave concert proceeds to the recall campaign.) When I called home a few weeks ago, what does my brother want to talk about? Bleeding Evan Meacham and at several dollars a minute...

It is interesting the effect Meacham's governorship has had on the local Republicans and Democrats. The Democrats are just sitting on their hands since Democratic Party registration has increased massively during Meacham's governorship. It would suit them best for Meacham to gaffe through an entire term. The recall committee, meanwhile, has the support of many moderate Republicans and even Barry Goldwater has suggested that Meacham stand down in the interests of the party. The chairperson of the recall campaign is Ed Buck who happens to be gay. Apparently Meacham supporters have been seen with bumper stickers with "Queer Ed Bucks Recall". Pleasant bunch, aren't they?

I'm glad to hear that you didn't vote for him. Why not exercise your right to vote again in the recall? If Meacham's conduct has caused lots of people to register, then, at least, something good has come out of the whole mess.

American politics is strange but always fascinating...))

Cathy Ozog I saw the Presidential debate with all the candidates. Of the Republicans, I was interested in hearing from Bob Dole after what you said. I was not impressed. The man kept saying "I have always supported the President. My voting record proves my support for President Reagan." So what...the man has George Bush sitting right there. Why is he trying to stand on the President's coattails, when Bush has his arm around Reagan? Robertson and Haig - no comment. If either gets support, I'll be amazed. Kemp does have the look. I thought "Kennedy" when I saw him, but his words are different. He's got hawk written all over him. Those good looks hide an iron fist that would make Maggie look like a wimp. I liked Du Pont a lot. He has guts and I liked some of his radical views on schools and social security. Furthermore, he comes out and says what

he means. Of course, I'm also a member of NARAL and his views conflict there. Maybe a ticket of Dole/ Du Pont would be nice - the corporate merger for the Presidency.

((I didn't see the first half of the debate since Barbara, in the words of George Bush, found "Jake and the Fat Man" more interesting. In retrospect, she was probably right.

Dole was disappointing, wasn't he? He needs to create a stir to capture the public imagination but he flopped in that debate. Maybe he's over-compensating for his old hatchetman image. He's much more interesting when he makes snide comments about all the foreign wars the Democrats have dragged the US into. (Civil war is the Republican speciality.) I don't know how Kemp manages to create a Kennedyesque image with that mop of grey hair. When he stated point blank that he would pardon North and Poindexter (the only Republican not to fudge the question) he fair took our breath away. I really admire his forthrightness. It's a pity he's as loopy as a loon.

I didn't know you were a NARAL member. I suppose you're a keen supporter of Bob Packwood, the only Republican with the guts to take on the anti-abortion lobby. He's in favour of an amendment to the Constitution all right. However, much to the religious right's annoyance, he wants to enshrine a woman's right to an abortion.))

Doug Brown I've been enjoying your analysis of the Presidential candidates.

For the most part, I agree with your views. I tend to disagree with Alan Stewart's comments (and your agreement with him) that because Jesse Jackson lacks administrative experience, "it must be expected that a Jackson administration would be one long keystone cops comedy of botchups..."

This presumption seems to have many flaws.

I feel the office of President is unique. While the majority of our presidents come from Congress, I feel the administration of a President is far different than that of Congress. Governor is far better administrative background for a president than Congress. But look at all the botched up administrative SNAFUS coming from the current former governor. Reagan appears most botched up of all! Richard Nixon was Congressman, Senator and Vice President but had a few administrative problems anyway. And loads of presidents were neither governors nor congressmen --- Eisenhower, Hoover, Wilson, Taft, Garfield, Grant --- back to Washington, many held no public office prior to the presidency.

I ask, how can a candidate in today's political system stand a chance without being a good administrator? A year and a half campaign in the press spotlight through all the primaries and all the travel, must take a candidate of organisation, with a solid administrative backing to ever get out as victor in a national convention. Still, the administration of a president is far different than that of a successful candidate. It is also far different from that of congressman, evangelist or business mogul. Lee Iacocca is a name often offered as a possible candidate. He's a great administrator in business but I'm not sure his presidency (if ever elected) would be any smoother than a Jackson, Dole or Bush.

Sure, I'd feel better if Jackson turned a state around from poverty to prosperity as its governor, but having not done so, shouldn't eliminate him from consideration. I really think, if he was white, he'd be the next president.

And Simon, if as you state to Alan Stewart, "He (meaning Jackson) would not make the best president...", why do you profess to be a Jackson supporter? If you think his ideas are best but seriously feel a Dukakis or Dole would be a better president, just say so. It's always best to support who you think would ultimately do the best job.

I certainly have reservations about Jackson as president -- and experience is one of my most major doubts -- but of those declared, he's got my vote!

((My main reservation with Jackson is that he does have his own prejudices but, worse of all, he won't admit or apologise for them. In a recent interview with Mother Jones, he appears incapable of even saying that his 1984 reference to Jews as "Hymies" and New York as "Hymietown" was a mistake. Instead he just blames the press. After some thought (and after much discussion with Barbara) I would say that Jackson does harbour prejudice against Jews and, more seriously, he doesn't think he's done anything wrong. Consequently I'm reconsidering my support for Jackson, such as it is.

Who does that leave me with? Dukakis is interesting but gives in to gay-bashing. Babbitt is hopeless. Gore and Gephardt are too conservative. Who does that leave us with? Paul Simon come on down!

The problem is that the Rainbow Coalition, of which Jackson is the figurehead, is a positive force for the underprivileged. It keeps the issues of poverty and unemployment on the political agenda and it should have a significant impact on the Democratic platform, whoever finally takes the nomination. I suppose you could say I'd like to support the Rainbow Coalition without supporting Jackson.))

Jake Halverstadt Pick of the Slime was pretty good and generally echoes my sentiments. Don't think I could bring myself to vote for Jackson, I have a laundry list of gripes against him from the Farrakhan incidents to Jackson's version of the events surrounding Dr. King's assassination.

I lived in Arizona when Bruce Babbitt was governor there. He really made a storybook ascendancy into power. Gov. Raul Castro resigned to accept an appointment as ambassador to Argentina. Lieutenant Governor Wesley Bolin moved up to take over the statehouse. Then Bolin died of a heart attack, so Babbitt, as attorney general, moved up.

Which of the Democrats do I like? Not Gephardt! I was just starting to like Biden when his wheels fell off. I saw him speak at the Colorado Dem convention in 1980 and was quite impressed. I like Babbitt, but think he has no chance. Once I read someone's column saying Babbitt came across on television as a washed-out Nixon I couldn't watch him with a straight face any more. Ideologically I stand closest to Sen. Simon, but he hasn't captured my fancy yet. Gore needs a divorce and a move to the left (fat chance). Dukakis lacks depth.

On the Republican side, it looks as though Colorado is Dole's for the asking. He's certainly cleaned up his act from the '76 campaign, when he ran for VP with Gerald Ford. Bush holds plenty of IOUs but I don't see deep support for him once the primary races are underway. Forget Kemp, his base of support is too narrow. Robertson? // I watched his speech when he declared his candidacy, sure were a lot of people booing him. He'll get enough support to play a role at the convention. // Keep an eye on duPont. He's got some goofy ideas, but I think he will be the surprise of the GOP pack. If the Democrats win in '88, the Republicans nominate duPont in '92. You heard it here first. //

I'm also putting out a call for people to check out Flashpoint. // If you could plug it in Excitement City I'd be eternally in your debt. Just like VISA. // I envision the first several turns taking little or no time, and you may find you like the thing.

((Dole certainly has plenty of genuine grassroots support. The question is, can he tap it. For a candidate who exudes a competent, hands-on approach to the presidency, his organisation is ramshackle. I suspect he may fail to capitalise on his nascent support. For that reason he may well lose out to a well-oiled and well-funded Bush machine.

Flashpoint looks very interesting but its not really my cup of tea. Anyway, until ECU hits its stride, I'm having a strict moratorium on joining new games. For those who might be interested, I'll describe what Jake sent me. Players start off as powerful people on the politically divided planet of Bagnialto. The rules appear to be largely kept secret from the players. You start off with money with which you can buy influence or control over several country's governments. I suspect once you gain control of one or more governments and start writing its policies, the game gets really interesting. For starters the gamefee is just an SSAE per turn, and Jake needs to hear from you by January 1st. If you'd like to give it a try contact Jake at: 1106 Castlerock Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80521.))

Conrad von Metzke If Brian wishes to TM another 'Rivals,' I'm in. // Whatever map is chosen is fine, but I'd dearly love to try 'G' (Central Scotland), Austria or either of the two Welsh maps. Note, however, though 'G' is a real gem, it is unfortunately out of print and I cannot supply it - the only map of which this is true. (I have one laminated copy, but can't get it working in a copier.) Would also enjoy Ireland, but mainly because David accidentally sent me a triple supply and I shall NEVER get rid of the things.

((I'm afraid Brian's already chosen the next maps he plans to TM. However I'd gladly welcome another guest Railway Rivals GM. Doug Brown?))

Brian Longstaff I knew RR was growing in strength in the US, but the response has taken me somewhat by surprise! So, Game 2, "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes" (abbreviated to Killer Tomatoes) will be on map N, New England for four players. //

The RR game may not get off to a fast start. With Christmas coming, the GPO are talking postal strike. Am working on deadlines. ECU by airmail to me takes 7 days, so taking into account an extra 14 days for post both ways.....maybe 5 to 6 week deadlines.

In case Game 2 fills up quick, Game 3 will be "Frankenstein's Castle of Freaks" (abbreviated to "Frankie's Freaks") on map T (Middle Earth) for five players. I think three games is the most I can handle at the moment without over-reaching myself. I'm in 11 RR games and 1 Judge Dredd game myself, plus I'm a regular contributor to 2 Star Trek and 1 A-Team club newsletters, and a German book review fanzine...

((I don't think you really need 6 week deadlines for RR games. After all, there's not much diplomacy involved. Once the game starts, why not ask the players which deadlines they prefer?

I can understand you not wanting to over-reach yourself. I've decided to restrict myself to two Clines, a Stab and a Downfall. I'm sure the Stab and Downfall are going to be a lot of work and, of course, I have the zine itself to run as well. This is aside from the other non-zine stuff I do: the ISE, American World Dip Con organiser, PDO Auction assistant...))

Doug Brown As for your game openings for Stab and Downfall, how about a trade. I propose Bruce Geryk & Cathy Ozog or Rod Walker should play Stab, if Derwood Bowen and Glenn Petroski play Downfall. That should help both games greatly.

((Well, is anyone interested?))

Mark Nelson The international GM is obviously going to have to be a person of intelligence; a gentleman. Andrew England is a colonial, Melinda Holley belongs to a nation which has rebelled against King and Country; and the real clincher is that as your first UK subber, I should get a perk...

Sir, your dig at my variant is uncalled for. I demand satisfaction; pistols at 4000 miles.

The problem with the Downfall series is that after Downfall III most of the different variants have developed independently at the same time. // With Cline most development has been incorporated in a linear progression. Hence there would be no need for a Coolbop Cline.

In any case I'd call it Bebop Cline...

((OK, OK, you can GM the first ECU international game. Do you want to use my houserules or your own? The two main differences between British and North American Diplomacy are standbys or anarchy (I use standbys) and separation of seasons (I use the standard European two-season year). You need to spell out what systems you are going to use before the game starts.

I fired my pistol in an easterly direction out of my apartment window. Did I hit you? If not, it's your turn...

Your comparison of the development of Cline and Downfall was interesting. Unfortunately, I couldn't decipher all your handwriting so I had to cut a bit out.))

Mark Nelson Having seen the new Dr Who I can sadly comment that he is the worst ever. I have now stopped watching Dr Who; it's just got that bad. It's so blatantly aimed at a young audience, there's none of the background or interest or continuity of old. It seems the BBC had to do to Dr Who what they did to the excellent Blakes 7 - kill it.

Doug Rowling My favourite, or at least a Doctor Who I am quite partial to, was Peter Davison. He started off abysmally, but it was interesting to watch him develop into the part as time wore on. At the end of his stint I thought he had developed into a Doctor Who of just enough alien tendency, when viewed against his assistants at any rate, to play the role really well. Of course it was about this time he was cut. Unlike Carol Naylor, most people I have discussed Doctor Who with think that Sylvester McCoy is not much of a step forward. I feel he is a disaster. Not as unconvincing though as Bonnie Langford is as a computer whizz. There is also a theory that BBC drama don't like Doctor Who and are out to close it down, making it so bad even Americans begin to realise it is awful. Sorry that wasn't very nice. I just don't watch TV much, having no interest in much of what is on, which I condemn as rubbish. Much of what is on is American imports, especially soaps, which I loathe. I have got to make an exception for the football (not soccer); the only sport I have ever been able to watch with any interest whatsoever.

((I don't think that anyone in Britain can get on their high horse about terrible imported soap operas now that American PBS stations are putting out a media blitz for the atrocious East Enders. Even the New York Times is joining in with a front page story (cont. page 24) on the history of the show and the characters involved. This is not the sort of thing you like to see at eight in the morning. Having experienced British and American TV, I would like to dispel the myth that British is superior because, to Barbara and myself, it clearly isn't. However, I think I'll reserve that for a future article.))

Brian Longstaff Dr Who: sorry to disagree with Carol Naylor, but I do not like the new Doctor. It's not so much Sylvester McCoy but the terrible scripts he's had to slog his way through. "Time and the Rani" was so bad that I found myself totally apathetic over the fate of our hero and companion(s) at the conclusion of each cliff-hanger(?). The second story, the same. The third? For one of the few times in my life, I must admit to not watching the show, although various friends inform me that it was quite good. Tonight comes "Dragonfire", the 150th story. This one I shall watch, but unless the scripts get better, I'm afraid that this Doctor will be the last. Figures are already down some two million on Colin Baker's version...

((It certainly looks like Sylvester McCoy will be the end of the line unless he can turn the show around. However it doesn't seem he's getting much support from the powers that be. The new series should come to New York in March so, please, don't give away too much of the plots.))

Brian Longstaff "PAL territory" = British, European and Australian video system that makes it incompatible with the American video system.

Star Trek: The Next Generation: This show is already available over here in good video copies (not camera) although most people are willing to wait until early next year for the official copies at less than £10! Again, I must disagree with Carol - enthusiasm for the show spent by the time the BBC have it!! You must be joking! British Star Trek clubs are already discussing the series, and all that they've seen of it was the pilot, "Encounter at Farpoint" (screened at Trekdom's Midcon, courtesy of Richard Arnold)! Besides, look at the time between the original series, the animated series, and the first film. Star Trek lives.

Aside to Simon: your little piece on ST:TNG, on page 10/11 - would you mind me quoting it in the sub-zine I write for the New Enterprise Club newsletter? I'll acknowledge the source, of course (a free advert for ECU!).

((I've no objection to anyone reprinting anything from ECU, so long as you acknowledge the source. All theft is flattery, as far as I'm concerned.

A friend of ours, Gloria Jacobs (see, I acknowledge my sources) offered an interesting observation on the new series. The old series just concentrated on the main characters. The first season really only concerned Kirk, Spock and McCoy. On ST:TNG each member of the new cast (about nine in total) has received a fair amount of attention. At a convention Barbara and I attended, David Gerrold said that the new series would not be following TV innovations such as the Hill Street Blues technique of having plots overlap from episode to episode. However, the kind of large, ensemble cast, as popularised by Hill Street, is now being used in ST:TNG. That certainly is a major contrast from the old series.))

David McCrumb I notice you used mm/dd/yy for your date. Is this a convention since moving here? In one of my old library jobs we used dd/mm/yy, which I find much more logical, and it took me two years to switch back to the norm here.

((I'm glad somebody finds the day/month/year system of writing dates more logical. I had to change to the American system when I started working as a bank teller. I used to have such problems with US coins too. When I was hired I wasn't sure which coin was the dime and which was the nickel. Surely the larger coin should be worth more? Then there was the time when I mistook some half dollars for Ikes...))

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WORLD DIP CON UPDATE

You should receive a new flyer for World Dip Con with this issue. This one has concrete details on how to register (basically send me \$10) and our special offer on accomodation. Please note that the title of the convention is now "World Dip Con" not "Diplomacy Worldcon" as I used in my last publicity. This is because the title "Worldcon" is copywrite in both the USA and Britain for the annual SF convention. To avoid any possible trouble or offense, I and the Manorcon committee intend to use the title "World Dip Con" from now on.

A couple of people have written to me for information. Larry Peery tells me that he intends to make Dipcon in Texas on the 1st-4th July first, then he will leave directly from Dallas to Europe to do some touring in France and England before the convention itself. A couple of Californians intend to make it over (Ron Spitzer and Jay Shufelt) as do Joe Santella and his wife. I've had little interest in group travel since most people are making their own way over. This confirms my belief that group travel won't work but I'll check it out just in case.

There's not much news on Adopt-a-Yank at the moment - maybe Derek Caws, who in between winning the Zine Poll is organising things in Britain, will come through with some news next issue. However Doug Rowling wants to hear from Americans who would like to join the POW team in the American Football competition. Sign up now and avoid the draft!

THE BRITISH ZINE POLL RESULTS

THE TOP TWENTY

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. War & Peace | 11. Ode |
| 2. Zeeby | 12. Small Furry Creature Press |
| 3. Cut & Thrust | 13. Mad Policy |
| 4. Denver Glont | 14. Dib Dib Dib |
| 5. Prisoners of War | 15. Morrigan |
| 6. Vienna | 16. Thing on the Mat |
| 7. Scorpio | 17. Home of the Brave |
| 8. Take That You Fiend | 18. Gallinaufrey |
| 9. NMR! | 19. Tumbling Dice |
| 10. Dolchstoss | 20. Diversions |

I've obviously been away from the British hobby too long. I had thought of doing a brief run-down on each zine but there are so many I've never seen! The British Zine Poll appears to be in a healthy state. There were 339 voters this year - a huge increase on the year before. I suppose this shows that zine polls are becoming larger and more pervasive on both sides of the Atlantic. This may be because the hobby is becoming larger and more active. Part of the reason, however, may be that John Piggott was going all out to match the Bruce Linsey's massive publicity efforts.

Derek Caws is suitably modest about War & Peace's victory. In his Christmas card to me this year he writes: "Ha! Seen the UK Poll results, yet? Eat your heart out, Biggles!". Derek is, of course, utter scum. His zine has all the regularity of a daily bran eater. W&P has always stressed good, reliable Diplomacy GMing but over the years Derek has acquired a certain wit and style. The letter column, which usually appears in some shape or form, is amusing and relaxed and there is regular football coverage in the shape of an account of Portsmouth F.C.'s promotion to Division One and, no doubt, imminent relegation back to Division Two. Recently Derek has taken on more and more coverage of the international hobby, even spawning a specialist zine, Globetrotter, to discuss World Dip Con arrangements. I'm sure the greater international vote this year and Derek's tendency to celebrate milestone issues with massive specials contributed that extra vote this year to give Derek his victory. It's certainly seems a long way from that fateful transaction in 1982 when I sold Derek my clapped out manual typewriter and gave him £5 for the postage on his first issue. As you may gather, the zine is unreservedly recommended.
Derek Caws, The Old Kitchen, Bere Farm House, North Boarhunt, nr Fareham,
Hants, PO17 6JL, England

Silly, long-winded address though...

I've decided I'm going to trade with Zeeby again if Nick Kinzett will have me. When I started doing the Zine Register I wrote to Nick suggesting a trade. A year later he replied. Another year later I found his reply again. Nick runs the British hobby by being the BNC and Orphan Games Rehouser amongst other important functions. Apparently his zine, apart from running games well, reliably etc..., provides a very dry and down to earth coverage of the British hobby from its most active and productive participant. I suspect the zine is often overlooked by Americans because Nick, understandably, doesn't have the time to devote to foreign subscribers. This is a shame because I'm sure the zine would give foreign subbers an unique insight into the British hobby.

Nick Kinzett, 11 Daleway Close, Green Lane, Coventry, CV3 6JF, England

Cut & Thrust is another of those exceptionally reliable chat and games zines which I haven't seen for a while. C&T is blessed by the fact that one of its co-editors, Glyn Palmer, is a skillful writer and professional journalist to boot, who even managed to have his zine reviewed in The Times. Americans could do well to check this zine out some time.

Derek Wilson, 6 Caldbeck Drive, Woodley, Reading, RG5 4LA, England

It is ironic that Denver Glont finally reaches 4th in the Zine Poll when Glover, by his own admission, is producing issues which in no way compare with his earliest enthusiastic, trailblazing editions. Despite Denver's (relative) decline, the zine is still one of my firm favorites. (Favorites? Hell, I'm becoming more and more Americanised) Anyway, back to the zine. Now where was I? Oh, yes, Denver is still incredibly reliable, despite very trying circumstances, and well GMed. There isn't as much chat as before but what remains is laid back and enormous fun. Glover probably doesn't want too many new subscribers now because he's still coping with the games cast off by his former subzine editor. Give it a try in about six months time (unless he's moved to Fiji).

Glover Rogerson, 31 Cornwall Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8LJ, England

Prisoners of War, however, is a zine which I have constantly recommended to Americans. Doug and Wallace produce a avowedly international zine which runs to seven week deadlines so that anyone can play in the games and still have time to diplome and send in orders. In addition POW has openings for all sorts of games you can't find in American zines. En Garde, Sagittarius Excalibur, Origins of World War 2 and even an American football management simulation game, Touchdown! are available. If you take in to account articles a letter column and superb graphics, you have an excellent zine. Unreservedly recommended.

Doug Rowling, 228 Kinnell Avenue, Cardonald, Glasgow G52 3RU, Scotland

I've never seen Vienna or Scorpio.

I thought that Take That You Fiend might win this year. Oh, well. My brother has just sent me a copy because he's now producing a TTYF subzine. This is useful because now I can review the zine. TTYF is blessed with two highly irreverent and entertaining ^{writers} in the (tiny) forms of Kevin Warne and John Harrington. Since I last saw an issue, the zine has shifted from mimeo to rather eye-straining reduced photocopy. The games are as left field as usual though (there are openings for Dreadnought, Origins of World War Two, Soccerleague a,d something called Flatten That Mutha..)

Kevin Warne, 8 Charles Street, Grays, Essex, RM17 6DX, England

NMR! continues merrily on. After eighty issues the zine has only been late once which is quite an achievement. A couple of Americans have already discovered the zine. The latest issue contained a waiting list with Melinda Holley on it. Apparently playing at least one game in every American zine is not enough for Melinda! Despite threats to axe the letter column whenever Brian has a work crisis (ie every other issue), letters have been a constant feature of the zine. Brian manages to produce a column which is both amusing and informative. The ECU letter column is partly modelled after the one in NMR!

Brian Creese, 256 Canbury Park Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6LG, England

IN eleventh place we find a former Zine Poll winner, Ode. John Marsden's speciality has been running Diplomacy and variants thereof with astonishing reliability. A few years back Ode was also the place for game related articles too (that was the year it won the Poll) but nowadays the zine is mostly game reports with some letters, articles and hobby news on the side. I notice with extreme envy that John has just filled an international game with players from England, Japan, Kuwait, Zimbabwe, Australia and the Bahamas. Although he doesn't have any further international openings for a while I'm sure he would welcome a couple of American standbys. In any case the zine is worth it for the reading material alone although the printing could certainly be improved!

John Marsden, 49 Queen Elizabeth Square, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9DQ, England

I'm certainly surprised to see Mad Policy so low. Richard appears to have been hit by a score of grudge votes though it is apparent that Richard has perhaps been spending too much time on special projects like World Dip Con and not enough time on his zine. MP has always been strong on news about the British hobby and the letter column has always been interesting and amusing. Perhaps if Richard cut out what little dross has crept in (ie pointless recountings of the plot of old films) and played to his strengths, MP might return to its former glory. I certainly hope so.

Richard Walkerdine, 13 Offley Road, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AZ, England

I saw Dib Dib Dib again after an interval of over a year. To my surprise, the zine has not changed one bit. The centrepiece of the zine has been its letter column, which has won an award or two over the years. At its best Dib Dib Dib provides the best in amusing and inconsequential chat. However Tom's rather reactionary and rigid politics tend to creep in which can irritate die-hard liberals like myself. This, of course, won't bother any of you because I'm sure I'm more liberal than the rest of you Americans put together.

Tom Tweedy, 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BD, England

On the whole I think the 1987 Zine Poll will be seen as a watershed in the history of the British hobby. The new, dynamic zines of the past few years have attained maturity and are now receiving the acclaim they deserve. The Diplomacy-FRP schism of the last few years has worked itself out nad the hobby seems a lot healthier and more cohesive as a result. Although the British hobby isn't producing zines of the excellence of Costaguana and Praxis, I suspect the overall quality is higher and a far broader selection of postal games are available.

By the way has anyone seen an issue of Thing on the Mat or Greatest Hits recently? I've sent both Pete Doubleday and Pete Birks four issues of ECU without receiving anything in return, not even a scream for mercy...

If any Americans are tempted by my reviews, I'll remind you that you can always use the International Subscription Exchange to send money to British editors. Just send me a cheque (or some cash if you're adventurous) specifying which zine(s) you'd like to subscribe to. Make the cheque payable to me since cheques for "the International Subscription Exchange" are difficult to cash. (Usually I chuck such things into ATMs and hope for the best.) Also specify if you'd like to receive the zine(s) in question by sea or airmail. Seamail is cheap but zines take one to two months to cross the pond. Airmail is about twice as expensive as domestic mail but you'll get your zine in about a week.

That was a public service announcement. Thank you and good night.

FROM

SIMON BILLENNESS & BARBARA PASSOFF

630 VICTORY BLVD. APT. 6F

STATEN ISLAND, NY 10301

USA

YOUR CREDIT IS: TRADE FOR

DIPLOMACY WORLD NEWS

In upstate Iowa, the Emmetsburg radio station KEMB will once again conduct its peculiar but popular "cess poll," in which the station's owner, John Schad, does a live broadcast from the local sewer plant.

His listeners flush their toilets to signal their political pleasure, and Mr. Schad then measures the water level, which drops about an inch for every 135 votes cast, and the lowest candidate wins.

"There's always some inadvertent voting, of course," said the station's program director, Colleen M. Devine. "But it's a pretty good indicator."

deadline: Saturday January 23rd